

Norman Moore and Mr. Colin Walker of Nature Conservancy for the investigation of the Great Crested Grebe with regard to the presence of toxic chemical residues.

Reference:

De Witt, James B., 1956. Oct. *Journ. of Agric. and Food Chemistry*. IV., No. 10., 863-866; 672-676.

On the original description of *Passer iagoensis motitensis* Smith

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It is generally agreed among systematists that Dr. Andrew Smith first described the southern race of the Great Sparrow *Passer iagoensis motitensis* Smith in his *Illustr. Zool. South Africa*, Aves, 1848, pl. cxiv, and this reference was used by Macdonald, *Contr. Ornith. West. South Africa*, 1957, pp. 156, 157, when he argued in favour of restricting the type-locality to near Hopetown, in the Cape Province to the south of the Orange River at 29° 37' S., 24° 05' E. Moreau, in Peters' *Check-List Birds of the World*, vol. xv, 1962, pp. 15, 16, uses the same 1848 reference and adopts Macdonald's restriction of the type-locality, as do Mackworth-Praed and Grant, *Birds Southern Third of Africa*, vol. ii, p. 55 (not type-locality restriction), and Clancey, *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. vii, 5, 1964, p. 138.

Smith's description of the Great Sparrow in his *Illustrations*, 1848, was not, however, the first naming of this species, which was actually originally described as *Pyrgita Motitensis* Smith, in his *Report Exped. Explor. Cent. Africa*, 1836, p. 50. The actual diagnosis as given leaves no doubt as to the accuracy of this assertion: "*Pyrgita Motitensis*. Top of head and back of neck grey; eyebrows, sides of neck, and back, chestnut; the interscapulars dashed with dark black-brown; eyeband, chin, and throat, black; cheeks white; breast and belly rusty white. Length 6½ inches. Inhabits the country about Old Latakoo [*i.e.*, near Kuruman, northern Cape Province (P.A.C.)]."

It is difficult to account for the overlooking by workers of this prior description of *P. i. motitensis*, which is earlier than the generally accepted one by some twelve years, because it appears immediately above the description of *Pyrgita diffusa* Smith (= *Passer diffusus* of modern usage), a name in universal use. In his 1848 description Smith stated that he took two specimens of the Great Sparrow sixty miles to the south of the Orange River, but I submit that he was in all probability writing from memory and that some error has occurred, the two birds concerned obviously being the same as those used as the basis for the 1836 description. No later investigator has found the Great Sparrow to the south of the Orange River, and the type-locality deriving from Smith (1848) has long been suspect. The adoption of the earlier description of 1836 with the type-locality of the taxon at Kuruman, within the known range of the species, is eminently more satisfactory from the point of view of distribution.